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ABSTRACT

Students in two college freshman composition classes (one American and one English as a second language) at a southern university researched the theory of contrastive rhetoric by exchanging pen pal letters and by progressing through a sequence of five formal assignments with revisions. These assignments led the students to consider their own experiences as members of "native" and "foreign" cultures. Students learned various research skills, as well as how to use a variety of data-gathering techniques. One assignment asked students to defend or criticize Robert Kaplan's article on contrasting rhetoric, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education." Results showed that about half the ESL students disagreed with Kaplan in some way, while over two-thirds of the American students disagreed. Many pointed out that Kaplan ignored writing's dynamic nature, and that there is not necessarily an equivalence between a language and a nationality. The paragraph and discourse structures of the students did not reflect cultural differences, but there were contrasts in how students from different cultures approached the assignment. Americans tended to be the most argumentative, followed by the Arab students. Japanese students were the most self-reflective and thoughtful. The project, beneficial for both teacher and students, indicates that contrastive rhetoric, despite its limitations, is a powerful and informative concept. (NKA)

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THE STUDENT AS RESEARCHER: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

Conference on College Composition and Communication
Atlanta, Georgia
March 1987

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When I wrote my proposal and had to categorize my talk as teaching, research, or theory, I was faced with somewhat of a dilemma, for ethnography, by definition, blurs these categories. What I'll be talking about today involves all three: I'll be describing an ethnographic research project I did last fall, so I'll be talking about research; the project took place in my Comp II classes, where I was teaching students how to do academic research papers, so I'll be talking about teaching strategies; and the project was about the theory of contrastive rhetoric, so I'll be talking about a particular theoretical issue of interest to both ESL and native English composition teachers. I decided, finally, to categorize what I was doing as research, for it was the choice of research methodology--ethnography--that led to the implication of the other activities. But throughout my talk today I'll be alternating between my various roles as researcher, teacher, and theorist.

Ethnography in composition research has come to be associated with research in which the teacher is researcher. This is a natural consequence of ethnography's emphasis on the researcher as a participant/observer in the community being studied. As a teacher, one can both participate in the classroom community and observe; in fact, it is necessary for teachers to consider both how their participation as a

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teacher affects what they observe, namely, the learning in the classroom; and how what they observe in this community affects their participation. Thus, when the researcher takes on the role of teacher, the observer becomes the participant; and when the teacher takes on the role of the researcher, the participant becomes the observer. It is impossible, in fact, to separate teacher and researcher.

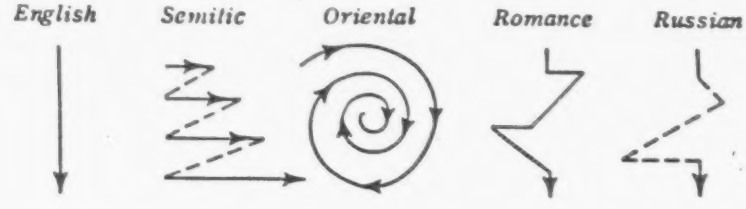
In ethnography, a related blurring occurs in the distinction between teacher and student, for as the teacher collects data, the student becomes the authoritative informant and the teacher becomes the willing student of this data. Given this blurring of the distinction between teacher and student that already exists in ethnography, it was just a matter of time before people began talking, not only about the teacher as ethnographic researcher but also about the student as ethnographic researcher. The time came, in fact, last year at the TESOL conference in Anaheim and CCCC in New Orleans, when Shirley Brice Heath and Vivian Zamel, and their colleagues, discussed a variety of projects they undertook in which the student was an ethnographer.

When students become ethnographic researchers, they become observers of their own participation in a community; at the same time, through their research activities of reading, writing, talking and listening, they become participants, sharers, in the communities they observe.

After hearing Zamel and Heath last year, I became extremely excited at the prospect of incorporating this principle into my research and teaching. Since I was scheduled to teach Comp. II to non-native speakers of English the next semester, I decided to set up a student-

ethnography project right away; for what better course to employ the concept of the student as researcher in than Comp II, which is known as "the research paper course"? And where better to employ ethnography than in a situation where I was teaching students from radically different cultures than mine?

I decided, therefore, to set up my Comp II courses as an investigation of contrastive rhetoric. Contrastive rhetoric is the provocative theory proposed twenty years ago by Robert Kaplan, who argued that speakers of different languages employ different rhetorics; especially, he said, they tend to organize written discourse differently. He characterised these differences in these now-famous diagrams:



I had been disappointed with much of the contrastive rhetoric research so far because of its limited treatment of rhetoric: contrastive rhetoricians seem to focus exclusively on text structures; they also treat the "rhetorics" of different languages rather monolithically and narrowly. English rhetoric, for example, seems mainly, for contrastive rhetoricians, to consist of the five-paragraph theme. So I've been seeking ways to collect data about rhetorical contrasts in other ways. One way was through a survey I gave ESL students about their rhetorical backgrounds. The survey, however, was inevitably rather restricted in scope, since all the data was based on

students' self-report; thus the answers didn't always fully reflect what actually occurs with regard to rhetorical instruction in these students' native countries.

I decided, therefore, to design my student-ethnography project around class activities that would explore contrastive rhetoric. What I did was teach two classes, one American and one ESL; both were Composition II, whose goal is to prepare students to do academic writing--analytic writing, transactional writing, writing based on research. As a class, and in both classes, we took as our topic contrastive rhetoric, and we took as our data ourselves. That is, we researched ourselves, our own writing, how we expressed ourselves and communicated with each other.

Two main writing activities were involved:

1) Pen pal letters, where students wrote on-going letters three times a week all semester to an assigned pen pal in the other class. Each student had a notebook in which to write the letters, and every two weeks students exchanged their notebooks with their pen pals.

2) A sequence of five formal assignments, each of which went through at least two drafts and sometimes more. These assignments led students, first, to consider their own experiences as members of "native" and "foreign" cultures, and then, gradually, to research how these and other cultures communicate orally and in writing.

   --Assignment 1: Write about a personal experience in which you were a "foreigner."

   --Assignment 2: Summarize Robert Kaplan's article, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education."

   --Assignment 3: Support or critique Kaplan's theory, using at least two texts--of whatever sort--to support your hypothesis.

   --Assignment 4: Research an aspect of intercultural communication, using some aspect of either Peter Farb's Word Play or Edward Hall's Silent Language as theoretical framework, and employing

some sort of non-textual data-gathering technique, for example an experiment, observation, or survey.

--Assignment 5: Interview someone from a different culture to find out about some aspect of that culture you didn't understand before.

As a teacher, I had several goals in mind. First, I designed the course to move, developmentally, from tasks requiring personal exploration to tasks requiring more interactive, public exploration, that is, from "expressive" to "transactional" purposes. Second, I tried to design activities so new activities would build on earlier ones, and so that students could move along Bloom's taxonomy, from synthesis to application to theory. Third, I designed the course to help students learn various research skills, especially summary and paraphrase, hypothesis-testing, incorporation of multiple sources, and evaluation of other perspectives. Finally, I designed the course to show students how to use a variety of data-gathering techniques (textual analysis, observation, survey, experiment, interviews).

Some of you may be surprised to note that one thing I did not do in this research paper course was teach students how to do library research papers. In fact, I avoided the library completely--and intentionally. Past experience with library research has convinced me that working on library research with freshmen, American or ESL, is a waste, leading at best to long "data- and quotation-dumps" and at worst to plagiarism, both intentional and unintentional. I chose instead to focus on some of the thinking skills involved in any sort of research. Also, I chose to introduce students to a range of methodologies besides humanities

text-based research, some of which may be easier for freshmen to grasp and apply.

As a researcher, my goal was to do an ethnography. In fact, the project was ethnographic on several levels: it was an ethnography of an ethnography of an ethnography. I was doing an ethnography of my students who were doing an ethnography of themselves as they considered Kaplan, who was doing an ethnography (in the sense that any cultural exploration is ethnographic) of the various cultures he discussed.

This multi-level examination provided the necessary "triangulation" that must occur in any ethnography. Ethnography is a descriptive, non-quantitative method that gets its authority from the fact that data comes from multiple perspectives. Each of the different perspectives functions as a control on the other perspectives and as an exploration of the other perspectives, so that the description that emerges is both in-depth--or "thick"--and without subjectivity. Specifically, ethnographers often achieve triangulation by considering three perspectives: the culture itself, the natives' self-perceptions of that culture, and the researcher's perceptions of his or her impact on that culture. Thus, besides collecting data about contrastive rhetoric, I considered my own participation in the culture I was studying, and I also asked the "natives"--my students from different cultures--to provide their own perspectives. In other words, besides studying contrastive rhetoric, I studied the context in which contrastive rhetoric was studied.

In so doing, I hoped to expand Kaplan's original perceptions about cultural differences. In addition, I hoped to offer a critique of his

original methodology, which is limited because of its absence of triangulation: all Kaplan ever considered was his own intuitions about the cultures he examined. Although many of these intuitions have proved to be quite accurate, they are subject to expansion and evaluation, as I learned when I asked my students to become researchers.

The main thing I want to look at today was paper 3, for it was with this paper that students were most involved in this ethnographic study of contrastive rhetoric. In this assignment, I asked students to either agree or disagree with Kaplan's hypothesis in "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education" (which they had just summarized in paper 2), and to support their contentions by using at least two "texts." We talked in class about what these "texts" might be--their own past papers, papers from other students in the classes (which I had photocopied and made available to the students), their pen pal letters, published writing in English or in another language, letters they received from other people, translations into English of writing written in other languages, etc. In fact, students were quite ingenious in finding resources. Some students worked deductively, developing their own hypotheses about Kaplan and then looking for texts to support their hypotheses. Most worked inductively, however, locating texts and then trying to figure out what these texts showed them about contrastive rhetoric.

What the students found about contrastive rhetoric will not lead to any conclusive evaluation of contrastive rhetoric as Kaplan described it. In fact, in many cases, students from the same nationality disagreed about whether Kaplan was right about their language's

rhetorical disposition. What they found--and what I found from studying them--however, leads to a much richer view of contrastive rhetoric than what can be gained from the examination of texts. Especially, what the students found were many of the difficulties inherent in a simplistic approach to contrastive rhetoric.

When the students agreed with Kaplan (see examples 1, 2, 3), they were able to go beyond simply noticing that Kaplan was right to talk about the relationship of this text structure to the culture at large. The Japanese students, for example, noticed the relationship of indirect structures to attitudes about politeness that have been taught: "[the Japanese] prefer to be modest and polite, what we call an old-fashioned way" (Junko Tanaka). All three Japanese students emphasized that indirection was taught, not inherent in the language: "Our generation has been trained to be able to appreciate our own feelings and an author's intention of writing indirectly. . . We try to achieve what we call 'guessing skill,' writing as indirectly as we can and we read a great amount of indirect writing" (Yoko Tago).

The three Japanese students were in general the most self-reflective of the ESL students. One of them even used the paper to consider her own reactions to Kaplan and how they changed as a result of doing research:

> My first idea [when reading Kaplan] about linguistics was that a person that doesn't speak a language can never understand the structure of that language. However, as I've done my research I understand that my idea about the language was wrong. Although I've been speaking Japanese more than twenty years, I had never noticed that Japanese was such an indirect language until I researched it by myself. (Kazumi Mase)

Kazumi admitted to me during a conference on her rough draft that when she first read Kaplan's article she was angry because she thought he was criticizing Japanese writing. As she reflected, however, she realized that "since I started learning my language in elementary school, I've been guessing the answer from the given clues." This, she told me, made her depressed and frustrated. The more she thought about it, the more she realized, too, that the difference between Japanese and English rhetoric may cause communication conflicts: "English speakers may conclude that Japanese is so indirect that they never reach the point, while Japanese people think that English is too simple that they explains about only one thing over and over."

Many Arabic students also agreed with Kaplan about his assessment of their rhetoric: "By looking carefully at my own writing in English when I first learned to write in English, I found that I linked most of my ideas coordinately" (Maher Albaiat). The Arabic students were in general less self-reflective than the Japanese students. One did point out, however, that the parallel structure in Arabic was a result of the Islamic religion:

> It is a fact that repetition and parallelism in the Arabic language is influenced by Quran. Quran to Arabs is not just one form of human speech among others, but a vehicle to reach God. The verses in the Quaran are repeated again and again to emphasize. Being Muslims, the Arabs adapted the path of Quran and applyed its repetition structure in all of their writings. Some attempts were made by some writers to establish other styles of writings to keep up with the development of other aspects of life. Those writers found that it is not easy to convince religous leaders. The religious leaders belive that any attempt to apply other styles of writing other than Quran, will make people forget their religion sence Quran will not be the major source for their writing. (Khalid Altowaijri)

About half the ESL students disagreed with Kaplan in some way; just over two-thirds of the American students disagreed (see examples 4, 5, 6). Most of these students agreed in general with Kaplan, but they felt he had made rather hasty generalizations on the basis of limited data. They thought the situation was much more complicated than Kaplan suggested. The students found a lot of problems with Kaplan's research design. The students-- both American and ESL--started by feeling somewhat defensive about Kaplan and his descriptions of their cultures' rhetorics; fueled by their resentment at an outsider making judgements about their cultures, they were able to state many legitimate objections to Kaplan's methods and argument.

Several pointed out, for example, that Kaplan ignored the different purposes and genres of writing, treating all writing as the same in each language group:

> I don't agree with Kaplan's theory. I think it is not the language which affect the writing, but the purpose or mode of writing that effects the writing. . . Both [Oriental and English writers] may write in a direct manner when they are in an expository mode and. . . indirect. . . when they are in a descriptive mode. (Nik Hussin, Malaysia)

> I agree with this idea [Kaplan's theory] when the Orientals write about a fiction story and about an experience because they use their imagination in writing these papers. Nevertheless, I believe that the Orientals do not write directly in writing about the facts, such as history, an instruction, and a description of an object. (Sabariah Othman, Malaysia)

> In [some] situations, indirection is unnecessary. The usage of indirect does exist in poems or some essays. However, Chinese writing can be very direct when dealing in newspaper articles or interviews. (Theresa Tsai, Taiwan)

Many of the students pointed out that Kaplan ignored writing's dynamic nature, that far from remaining stable artifacts for study,

written texts change as writers mature, as writers are taught, and as writers revise.

One Arabic student, for example, pointed out that the rhetoric of student writers may be much different from the rhetoric of professional writers:

> When it comes to explaining a point or trying to make a point, it differs from person to person, not from a language to a language. I think it has more to do with the person's understanding of things. . . I believe that Arabic language has a very straight way of explaining things. It is more appropriate to analyze the writings of the professionals instead of students in order to judge a language. . . The reason that [an Arabic student writer writing in English] might go in a zig-zag way is because he maybe does not know enough English to go straight or he either does not understand it fully. (Abdullah Al-Ahmadi)

Several American students made similar points, especially after looking at other freshmen papers:

> Although this linear form of writing is taught and accepted in the English society, it does not always occur, especially in the writing of students. The art of writing takes some people years to learn and some never learn correctly. . . We [Americans] are taught to write in a linear form; it is not something we are born with. (Pam Stover, USA)

Many other students agreed with Pam. Though they agreed that linearity and directness were valued in English prose, they did not believe this structure reflected English speakers' thought: "the English paragraph is direct because we have been taught to write directly beginning in elementary school," wrote the American Sydney Wood. And, explains Khanida Pradaxay (from Thailand): "Not all Americans write the way Kaplan explains. But the English textbook writers do."

It is not just that writing changes as students mature and are instructed; it also changes as people revise, which was pointed out by this American student:

> True we do expect . . . directness when reading such formal writings as articles in newspapers and magazines, but these articles are not a reflection of native English-speaking thought patterns. These articles have been carefully constructed and put into a form that can be presented to the public, and a less formal example of writing is needed to observe our thought patterns. (Billy Hartnedy, USA)

Another American student agreed with Billy, especially about Kaplan's research methodology, which did not consider writing as a process:

> A rough draft shows the native English writer's thought patterns without an instructor's interference. I feel that Kaplan should study rough drafts because the thinking process is changed when a rough draft is changed to an orderly piece of writing. (Alicia Parker, USA)

Some of these objections are summarized in this discussion from a very imaginative paper in which a student reported on an experiment he designed to contrast a speaker's oral version of an event with a written version of the same event:

> This use of circular indirectness and the use of digressions in . . . oral communication make it clear that the patterns Kaplan assigns to various cultures are certainly not rigid. The patterns of speech can and do vary not from culture to culture but from person to person, . . . even topic to topic. . . Somewhere between the thought process, manifest as unprepared oral communication, and written English there comes a translation step. It is during this step that we apparently revise our thoughts from their normal arrangement into a form closely resembling the standard English that we were all taught in school. (Doug McCarty, USA)

McCarty realized what Kaplan himself has subsequently realized as he has become influenced by the work of Walter Ong--that not only are some cultures more oral than others, but that literacy transforms thought.

Another objection raised to Kaplan's argument was that Kaplan lacked a diachronic perspective: "Kaplan says that English is . . . logical and straight to the point. . . This hasn't always been so. [It has only become true] in more recent times when English became a more standardized language" (Brent Sawrie, USA).

Finally, several students pointed out that there is not a necessary equivalency between a language and a nationality, since many cultures have several different languages or dialects, and since many languages--English, for example--are spoken in radically different countries:

> I beg to differ with Kaplan's statement because he did not take into consideration that there [is] more than one English-speaking country in this world. My research of letters from friends who are natives of Great Britain found that their thought patterns and paragraph structures are not dominantly linear in development. (Skip Green, USA)

In an ethnographic project such as this one, the data includes not just what the students said about contrastive rhetoric, but what they revealed through their own rhetoric. As you will no doubt have noticed, the paragraph and discourse structures of the students do not reflect cultural differences, and so these papers cannot be used as evidence of the rhetorics of these students' cultures. This is not surprising--and simply reinforces some of the objections the students themselves raised regarding Kaplan's original methodology. All of these papers are final drafts, revisions of earlier drafts that students shared with me and with other students in order to get feedback. All of these papers are written by students who have taken at least one previous semester--and in most cases more--of college-level writing

instruction. All of the foreign students have been in the United States at least a year, during which they have participated in an intensive English program. And all of the students have participated in class activities designed to teach them and give them opportunity to practice organizing academic writing. We especially worked in class on writing introductions that summarized the background (in this case Kaplan's work), identified an issue or problem, and then proposed an expanded or alternative hypothesis. In almost all cases, students were able to produce papers that followed this American academic structure. This doesn't mean that they would have done so naturally, without all the instruction; it simply means that student papers of this sort are not very good evidence.

I was able to notice some contrasts in how students from the different cultures approached the assignments. The Americans, as I mentioned, tended to be the most argumentative about Kaplan: over two-thirds chose to disagree in their papers. The Arabs were also pretty argumentative. Many, in fact, became rather defensive, feeling that Kaplan was criticizing their mode of writing. Interestingly, several Arab students told me in person that they didn't agree with Kaplan, but that they chose in their papers to agree with him because they thought that would be easier. I suspect, too, that they may have chosen to agree with Kaplan because they thought I agreed with Kaplan, and they didn't want to offend me.

The Japanese students, as I mentioned earlier, were the most self-reflective and thoughtful in their papers, and they tended to go beyond simply proving their hypotheses to address some of the related

issues. Although they, along with the Malaysians and Cambodians, did well on the assignment, all three groups preferred and did better on the first assignment in the course, a much more personal writing task. Few of the Arabs, on the other hand, did well or enjoyed the first assignment as much as this later assignment.

I should note, however, that all of the Arabs were male, while all the other students--Japanese, Malaysian, Cambodian, and Chinese--were female; it is quite likely that gender was affecting these differences as much as cultural background.

A final element in my triangulation of data requires that I examine my own participation in this project. As I mentioned earlier, I was a constant participant in the evolution of these students' papers, if not in the evolution of their thought on the topic. I made the original assignment and defined certain constraints on that assignment. I focussed the students' attention on certain features of academic writing. I led discussions and designed class activities on the topic, hoping to encourage a lot of perspectives on and exploration of the issues. I modelled the thinking processes involved in hypothesis-testing by making and supporting my own research hypotheses. I brought in examples of how other people approached this topic. I required students to turn in first drafts, which they shared in group conferences with me and three other students, and where students worked to clarify their hypotheses and methodologies and analyses.

Inevitably, my own biasses crept in. I tried not to tell students what I thought about Kaplan, and when I modelled examples I tried to make it clear that these did not necessarily reflect my own perspective.

I also tried to make clear that my evaluation of their papers would not depend on whether they agreed with me. But it is clear that my own perspective did creep in, for so many of the papers do reflect my opinion. Probably, as I helped the students clarify and revise their rough drafts, I nudged them in directions like my own. This is especially true in the American class. Perhaps in that class, I was less guarded about my perspective and more directive in conferences. And it is also clear that some students did not believe me when I said I would not grade them on whether they agreed with me but on whether they developed and supported a hypothesis. So they tried to figure out what I thought and then wrote the same. I think this may have especially been true in the ESL class and among the less proficient writers in both classes. Of course, some of them may have misjudged what I thought.

Not only did my bias perhaps change some of these students, but their biases changed me. I started the project with a very negative view toward contrastive rhetoric; in fact, I had just recently finished writing a critique of the theory. But as a result of my students' work, my own perspective on contrastive rhetoric has changed and become enlarged. Though I realize that contrastive rhetoric--especially its research methodology--has limitations (and I am now much more aware than before of some of these limitations, thanks to my students), I also can see how powerful and informative a concept it really is. There really are cultural differences in rhetoric, but we need to devise new research methodologies to describe them, and we need to consider all sorts of aspects of rhetoric.

I have been talking, just now, about the benefits of this student-ethnography from a research perspective: it allowed me to expand my view of contrastive rhetoric, and it allowed me to consider some methodological problems and issues in contrastive rhetoric. In addition, a very important benefit of this ethnography is to suggest ideas for more narrowly focussed or quantitative research studies that will avoid some of these methodological problems. For example, I now might do a study comparing the rough drafts of American and foreign writing students; or I might design a study to explore cultural contrasts in attitudes toward readers and writers.

The project was beneficial to me as a teacher and to my students as learners as well. Of course, it provided an opportunity for my students to write in a meaningful and interesting context. They were engaged in the topic, and they felt they were doing important work. I told them outright that I needed their help in studying this material, and that I would be citing them as references in my talk. Of course, a few of them were a bit intimidated by this--how could they, as lowly freshman, make a contribution?--but most were honored, and most put a lot of commitment and effort into their writing. About two-thirds through the course, in fact, one student, Misty, said to me she'd been talking to some of her friends in other sections, and that she thought our course was a lot harder than the other classes--"but it's also a lot more interesting."

Getting students involved in ethnographic research provides a natural opportunity to teach students research skills. In order for students to study contrastive rhetoric, they had to do a lot of reading and writing and connecting of those activities. They had to work on

summarizing, paraphrasing, and quotation. They had to practice a variety of research methodologies. They had to learn how to incorporate sources and test hypotheses. Obviously their own research projects had flawed research designs because of the limited sample sizes, but their reasoning about this research was authentic and, in many cases, sophisticated.

Obviously, because we were researching contrastive rhetoric, students had an opportunity to not only practice rhetoric but study it. Probably the biggest benefit of using contrastive rhetoric as our subject was that our studying of rhetorical contrasts led to an awareness of the rhetorical choices available in English or any language. Many students also became a lot more aware of the choices available in writing processes, especially as they started noticing the differences between rough drafts and revisions. Because students, therefore, were writing about writing, they were practicing and developing their metacognitive skills.

One cognitive skill the course gave students a lot of practice in was that of considering other perspectives, of decentering, especially of cultural decentering. For many of the American students, this course provided their first opportunity to become less insular culturally and to interact with non-American students. And for many of the ESL students, this course provided a welcome context for them to meet and talk with Americans. Students in both groups learned a lot about the other cultures, and a lot about the value of curing one's cultural myopia.

THE STUDENT AS RESEARCHER: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

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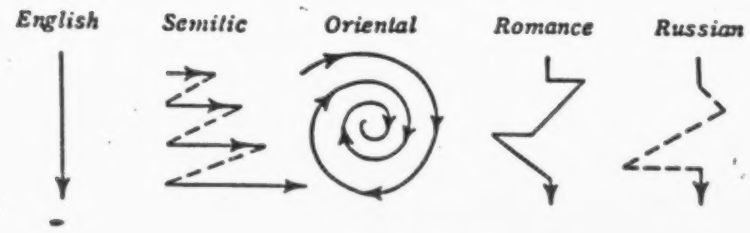
ROBERT KAPLAN'S CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC DIAGRAMS
(from "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-cultural Education." Language Learning 16:16.



WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR COMP. II--FALL 1986

1) Pen pal letters, where students wrote on-going letters three times a week all semester to an assigned pen pal in the other class. Each student had a notebook in which to write the letters, and every two weeks students exchanged their notebooks with their pen pals.

2) A sequence of five formal assignments, each of which went through at least two drafts and sometimes more. These assignments led students, first, to consider their own experiences as members of "native" and "foreign" cultures, and then, gradually, to research how these and other cultures communicate orally and in writing.

--Assignment 1: Write about a personal experience in which you were a "foreigner."

--Assignment 2: Summarize Robert Kaplan's article, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education."

--Assignment 3: Support or critique Kaplan's theory, using at least two texts--of whatever sort--to support your hypothesis.

--Assignment 4: Research an aspect of intercultural communication, using some aspect of either Peter Farb's Word Play or Edward Hall's Silent Language as theoretical framework, and employing some sort of non-textual data-gathering technique, for example an experiment, observation, or survey.

--Assignment 5: Interview someone from a different culture to find out about some aspect of that culture you didn't understand before.

EXCERPTS FROM STUDENT PAPERS

STUDENTS AGREEING WITH KAPLAN:

1. [The Japanese] prefer to be modest and polite, what we call an old-fashioned way. (Junko Tanaka)

2. Our generation has been trained to be able to appreciate our own feelings and an author's intention of writing indirectly. . . We try to achieve what we call "guessing skill," writing as indirectly as we can and we read a great amount of indirect writing. (Yoko Tago)

3. My first idea [when reading Kaplan] about linguistics was that a person that doesn't speak a language can never understand the structure of that language. However, as I've done my research I understand that my idea about the language was wrong. Although I've been speaking Japanese more than twenty years, I had never noticed that Japanese was such an indirect language until I researched it by myself. (Kazumi Mase)

4. Since I started learning my language in elementary school, I've been guessing the answer from the given clues. . . English speakers may conclude that Japanese is so indirect that they never reach the point, while Japanese people think that English is too simple that they explains about only one thing over and over. (Kazumi Mase)

5. By looking carefully at my own writing in English when I first learned to write in English, I found that I linked most of my ideas coordinately. (Maher Albaiat)

6. It is a fact that repetition and parallelism in the Arabic language is influenced by Quran. Quran to Arabs is not just one form of human speech among others, but a vehicle to reach God. The verses in the Quaran are repeated again and again to emphasize. Being Muslims, the Arabs adapted the path of Quran and applyed its repetition structure in all of their writings. Some attempts were made by some writers to establish other styles of writings to keep up with the development of other aspects of life. Those writers found that it is not easy to convince religous leaders. The religious leaders belive that any attempt to apply other styles of writing other than Quran, will make people forget their religion sence Quran will not be the major source for their writing. (Khalid Altowairi)

STUDENTS DISAGREEING WITH KAPLAN:

Purpose Affects Rhetoric as Well as Linguistic Background

7. I don't agree with Kaplan's theory. I think it is not the language which affect the writing, but the purpose or mode of writing that effects the writing. . . Both [Oriental and English writers] may write in a direct manner when they are in an expository mode and. . . indirect. . . when they are in a descriptive mode. (Nik Hussin, Malaysia)

8. I agree with this idea [Kaplan's theory] when the Orientals write about a fiction story and about an experience because they use their imagination in writing these papers. Nevertheless, I believe that the Orientals do not write directly in writing about the facts, such as history, an instruction, and a description of an object. (Sahariah Othman, Malaysia)

9. In [some] situations, indirection is unnecessary. The usage of indirect does exist in poems or some essays. However, Chinese writing can be very direct when dealing in newspaper articles or interviews. (Theresa Tsai, Taiwan)

Ability Affects Rhetoric as Well as Linguistic Background

10. When it comes to explaining a point or trying to make a point, it differs from person to person, not from a language to a language. I think it has more to do with the person's understanding of things. . . I believe that Arabic language has a very straight way of explaining things. It is more appropriate to analyze the writings of the professionals instead of students in order to judge a language. . . The reason that [an Arabic student writer writing in English] might go in a zig-zag way is because he maybe does not know enough English to go straight or he either does not understand it fully. (Abdullah Al-Ahmadi)

11. Although this linear form of writing is taught and accepted in the English society, it does not always occur, especially in the writing of students. The art of writing takes some people years to learn and some never learn correctly. . . We [Americans] are taught to write in a linear form: it is not something we are born with. (Pam Stover, USA)

Instruction Affects Rhetoric as Well as Linguistic Background

12. The English paragraph is direct because we have been taught to write directly beginning in elementary school. (Sydney Wood, USA)

13. Not all Americans write the way Kaplan explains. But the English textbook writers do. (Khamida Pradaxay, Laos)

Revision Affects Rhetoric as Well as Linguistic Background

14. True we do expect . . . directness when reading such formal writings as articles in newspapers and magazines, but these articles are not a reflection of native English-speaking thought patterns. These articles have been carefully constructed and put into a form that can be presented to the public, and a less formal example of writing is needed to observe our thought patterns. (Billy Hartnedy, USA)

15. A rough draft shows the native English writer's thought patterns without an instructor's interference. I feel that Kaplan should study rough drafts because the thinking process is changed when a rough draft is changed to an orderly piece of writing. (Alicia Parker, USA)

16. This use of circular indirectness and the use of digressions in . . . oral communication make it clear that the patterns Kaplan assigns to various cultures are certainly not rigid. The patterns of speech can and do vary not from culture to culture but from person to person, . . . even topic to topic. . . Somewhere between the thought process, manifest as unprepared oral communication, and written English there comes a translation step. It is during this step that we apparently revise our thoughts from their normal arrangement into a form closely resembling the standard English that we were all taught in school. (Doug McCarty, USA)

Historical Period Affects Rhetoric as Well as Linguistic Background

17. Kaplan says that English is . . . logical and straight to the point. . . This hasn't always been so. [It has only become true] in more recent times when English became a more standardized language" (Brent Sawrie, USA).

Nationality Affects Rhetoric as Well as Linguistic Background

18. I beg to differ with Kaplan's statement because he did not take into consideration that there [is] more than one English-speaking country in this world. My research of letters from friends who are natives of Great Britain found that their thought patterns and paragraph structures are not dominantly linear in development. (Skip Green, USA)

SIX STUDENT PAPERS

PAPER A: JAPANESE LANGUAGE [Uses Poetry as Data]

According to Kaplan's research, I learned that foreign students in the United States writings are different from Americans' because of different languages they use and different cultures they have been in. This fact allows them to have a different point of view of logic and a sequence of thought of writing: therefore, they develop paragraphs differently. Kaplan says that Orientals' writing is approached by indirection, which means the subject is focussed from a variety of views, and it is never shown directly, which makes Americans think it is awkward and unnecessarily direct.

I agree with this theory Kaplan made about Japanese in a way. Because I believe that language is a part of the culture behavior of people. But still, there are two faces in Japanese culture. One is the culture which, I think, proves Kaplan's theory that indirectness is part of Japanese culture. Another is the Japanese modernized and industrialized recent culture which also proves Kaplan's theory that culture effects people's attitudes towar language.

The first culture is a tradition. Ever since Japanese ancients found their language, it has been taught to Japanese as a media of exchanging ideas and imaginative thought and feelings of human beings. Taking after this tradition of using our language, our generation has been trained to be able to appreciate our own feelings and an author's intention of writings indirectly. We naturally became able to associate with people using indirect language and enjoy appreciating indirect language.

For instance, this is one short sentence that was written by Basho Matuso, which I found in a Japanese book.

A frog jumped into a old pond, and I heard the sound of water.

I would think that this sentence itself doesn't make sense at all to Americans, but this is the most appreciable and the most beautiful sentence to me, and I think that most Japanese would be very impressed by the way this sentence was written. The author, Basho, is saying that he heard a sound of water since a frog jumped into a pond. I would guess that this pond was about more than 500 years old, covered by duckweed and moss, but water is clear and clean, and it had been hidden in a place where no one pay attention. When Basho was traveling in Japan walking (there weren't any cars or any transportation when it was written), he found the exact scene that is written in this sentence, and he had been impressed by the silence and the quiet that he could even hear the sound of jumping frogs. The atmosphere I imagine from this sentence, I would think that this was written in a such a quiet--so quiet level that we won't be able to encounter--on one day of early fall, humidity and chilly morning. The atmosphere doesn't seem happy... maybe he was traveling alone. I can think of Basho's intention of being very sensitive about observing nature. And more than anything else, I envy his encountering and being able to tell us that it was so quiet that he could hear the sound of jumping frog.

Another example was written by Shiki Matusoko.

> The wisteria blossoms that are put in a vase are too short to reach the floor.

The way this sentence is written is also indirect but enjoyable for us Japanese. Shiki isn't the only author who has been known as one of the most sensitive authors, but also known as a man who spent most of his life sick in bed. Therefore, I would imagine that the intention of this sentence is the sick person's sensitiveness and sorrow. Who would care if the wisteria in a vase were too short to reach the floor? Shiki was too sick to get up and only thing he could do was think about the objects which reflect on his eyes. Once people get sick and have to stay in bed for a while, we notice a lot of things we have never thought about and realize how important the health is.

We Japanese respect and tend to keep our purpose of traditional writing style, indirection. We try to achieve what we call, "guessing skill," writing as indirect as we can and read a great amount of indirect writings. The way we were taught how to achieve this purpose for Japanese linguistics could be disadvantage arising from learning and developing English paragraph as a second language, but it is result of historic tradition, which, I think, is the major influence in the indirection of writing. . .

--Yoko Tago, Japan--

PAPER B: PARALLELISM IN ARABIC WRITING [Uses Own Translations of Articles from an Arabic Newspaper as Data]

Mr. Kaplan, who wrote an article about cultural thought patterns, illustrated and talked about some examples of how students from different cultures write differently. In his article, Mr. Kaplan chose different languages, one of these languages was Arabic. Being an Arabic speaking student, I agree with Mr. Kaplan's hypothesis that Arabic paragraph writing is based on a "complex series of parallel constructions." To illustrate this hypothesis, I am going to use some Arabic writing that I translated to English.

The two articles I used in this paper were written by Saudis in a daily Saudi newpaper called Alyaum. I translated these articles to English to show that Mr. Kaplan's hypothesis are accurate. The first example was written by Ali Salleh:

> Education is such a long journey, and the road of this journey is full of the barriers and hardships. Education is such a long journey that obliges anyone, who is involving and participating in this journey to be patient and omit from his knowledge and memory the meaning of tiresome. Education is a well that no creature on the globe knows its depth. Education is like a tree the more we take care of it, the better the fruit the tree will give during the harvest. Eventually education is the shortest way for securing the future.

In this article, instead of having a main idea supported by specific illustrations, the writer repeated "education" throughout the article to emphasize its importance. In the first sentence the writer used synonymous parallelism. In this sentence the writer tried to balance the thought or phrasing of the first part, "education is such a long journey," by the second part, "and the road for this journey is full of the barriers," and connected them by a coordinating conjunction, "and." In the second sentence, the "who" clause illustrate synonymous parallelism. Positive and negative parallelism are also apparent in the article. We could see this in the article because the writer said that education is hard and full of barriers, while on the other hand it is the shortest way for securing the future.

Another article, written by Ahmed Mubarek, follows the same patterns of the previous one:

> The shine of the moon reminds me of the lovely memories that I am still carrying in my head about how life used to be in the small village that I used to live in a long time ago. The shine of the moon reminds me of the lovely nights in that small village. The shine of the moon at that time used to be like the natural torch in the dark village of the moon with the freshness in that lovely nights. It also reminds me of the fisherman who used to go to the sea with the wagons that used to be pulled by donkies.

It is obvious that both articles contain repeated words such as "education" and "shine of the moon." The reason for this repetition is to emphasize how education is important for your future and how the shine of the moon reminds the writer about his village and the memories he still recall.

It is a fact that repetition and parallelism in the Arabic language is influenced by Quran. Quran to Arabs is not just one form of human speech among others, but a vehicle to reach God. The verses in the Quaran are repeated again and again to emphasize. Being Muslims, the Arabs adapted the path of Quran and applyed its repetition structure in all of their writings. Some attempts were made by some writers to establish other styles of writings to keep up with the development of other aspects of life. Those writers found that it is not easy to convince religous leaders. The religious leaders belive that any attempt to apply other styles of writing other than Quran, will make people forget their religion sence Quran will not be the maior source for their writing.

--Khalid Altowaiiri, Saudi Arabia--

PAPER C: AGREEING WITH KAPLAN, WHO SAYS "ENGLISH WRITING IS LINEAR" [Uses Papers from the American Class as Data]

"Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education" by Robert Kaplan says that the style of writing of English is linear. I agree with his idea. The native English writers intended their idea as clearly as they can express it.

In English the style of writing is mostly direct. Also, the communication to each other uses language directly rather than uses figurative language. It's linear. The short opening paragraph below is a paragraph which begins with a specific statement of the contents. It is by Kristen Keeler, an American student, and it is called "A Foreigner in the United States":

> The one time when I felt most like a foreigner in another country was when I moved to Nogales, Arizona.

This main point is directly developed by focussing specific points about the main idea.

Then it is divided into a series of subdivision that contain ideas that are necessary and related to the general idea. This is a deductive paragraph. Again, the paragraph by Kristen in the second paragraph:

> I started school there in the 8th grade. I was very nervous because it was the first day in a new school. I figured I would adjust after I met a few people. Well, meeting new kids ended up being very hard. The majority of the kids spoke Spanish. When the kids would come up and talk to me or ask me my name, they would ask me in Spanish. I guess they expected me to speak Spanish because I was so dark complected. After a few weeks, the kids knew I could not speak Spanish, so they proceeded to teach me. Well, to me, learning Spanish was hard, so I could not catch on. I made many friends, but I did not feel really close to them, because every once in awhile, they would speak Spanish and I would feel left out.

On the other hand, the inductive paragraph moves from specific to general ideas. Let's look at this second paragraph from "The Gap Narrows" by Regina Purdy, another American student. "The Gap Narrows" opens with this idea, saying:

> I started dating Todd on March 17, so that the time of his party we were pretty close. Despite this I was still hesitant when he invited me to his party. I was really worried that I wouldn't fit in with his friends. I had met three of the people that came but other than that I was the stranger and child of the party.

After analyzing this paragraph, I realized the whole paper mostly developed this general idea with examples and details. Then it brings it all together with only a central sentence at the end of the paper that shows the main point. The sentence below is the last sentence of "The Gap Narrows" by Regina:

> As I was driving home I realized that the generation gap might just be closer that I had originally thought.

In general, the linear style of English writing the inductive and deductive paper is easy to understand. The directly developed idea is linked together and sequenced to each part that is controlled by the main point, which is meaningful to the reader.

--Phalla Huot, Cambodia--

PAPER D: MY HYPOTHESIS [Uses Own Papers from Other Courses as Data]

Robert B. Kaplan, in his article, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education," says that some Orientals tend to use an indirection in their writings. Different perspectives are used to clear the idea but without realizing it, the description doesn't focus on the idea as clearly as expected.

I agree with this idea when the Orientals write about a fiction story and about an experience because they use their imagination in writing these papers. Nevertheless, I believe that the Orientals do not write indirectly in writing about the facts, such as a history, an nstruction, and a description of an object. I will show this by looking at some papers I have already written for other composition classes.

Orientals are known as people who are well-mannered and polite. The old generations held this tradition from a long time ago and passed it on to the new generations up until now. The most obvious countries that I can see exercising this tradition are Japan and Malaysia. They communicate to each other as nice as possible by avoiding using the rude ways. Being raised in this mannerful world, the Orientals are sensitive to the direct sayings. Thus, they will not tell something is wrong directly to another person because they don't want to hurt anybody's feeling. This tendency does affect their ways of thinking and expectedly their writings. This may also explain why the Oriental write indirectly in writing about experiences and fiction stories.

In the appendix (at the back), the first paper ["Moving From High School to College] fall under this circumstances. The sentences are indirectly developed in focussing the main idea. This composition was written by me and it hasn't been polished yet.

All through the paper, the end of every paragraph seem to focus on the same thing, that is, being independent. But I had never mentioned the word 'independent' until the last paragraph. And still I don't clarify enough the word. The word 'freedom' in the last paragraph may be clarifying a little about this. It shows that in the previous time, I didn't have the chance to do anything on my own but now I do.

For example, the fifth paragraph says:

> I was happy when I was told that attendance is not a big deal. If I skip a class, I'll miss the lecture but there's no such thing as a physical punishment. But of course I'll be punished in other ways, such as failing the exam. When I was in the high school, I'll be beaten or something else when I skipped class more than 3 days. Talking about these physical punishment, it is true that in the high school, the rules are very strict because it wants us to learn to obey the rules at a young age. I had to wear a uniform to school. Expensive jewelry are also banned to avoid the student from being a criminal victim. But now, I can wear whatever I want because I can take care of myself.

This paragraph tells us about how the rules are different between a university and a high school in Malaysia. I could skip the classes everyday and wear any expensive jewelry, but I have to think what is good or bad for me. What I was trying to say was that I can make my own decision now because I am an independent lady. But the sentences above never said this very directly.

As I mentioned before, there are times when the Oriental turn out to be direct in their writings. Those are when they write a historical, an instructive, or a descriptive composition. I described about my mother in the following short essay:

> She is small and short, even shorter than me. She is about 4 feet and 6 inches. Her skin is fair and her eyes are small because of her Chinese ancestry. She has many moles, one on her nose, one on the left side of her lips, some on her hidden body. Her soft, straight and long hair is showing her soft heart, her sincerity, and her honesty. She is 37 years old but her beauty is till there.

In this short essay, I used an inductive, linear-developed paragraph. I described her physical appearance with some detail ideas, such as her height, her eyes and her skin. Lastly, I came out with the general idea that she was beautiful even when she was 37 years old. The description before the general idea was used to support the general idea.

A 'How To' composition is a kind of instruction in doing something. As we all know, an instruction must be direct, or else people will not fully understand to follow what is being told in the composition. In this case, the writer won't use his or her imagination by swirling around, but he or she directly think about the main point. The next paper in the appendix ["How to Find an Apartment"] is a paper showing the using of direct words in an instruction. This is an instruction of how to look for an apartment.

Almost all of the paragraphs were using the deductive order. For example, below is the first paragraph:

> Looking for an apartment is not a simple process. It needs a lot of careful thinking and considering all the aspects, which involve the facilities, whether it is furnished or not, and other conveniences, especially if you plan to live in the apartment for a long period. Sometimes, you will not be satisfied with the surrounding or the payment, after you have lived there for only one or two months. As a result, you have to find another apartment which will make you comfortable or satisfy. To avoid from having such problems, you should follow these good steps before making any decision in choosing an apartment.

The first sentence was the main idea. It told us that it is not easy to find an apartment. Then the following sentences described about the requirements and the problems that we have to deal with before looking for an apartment, that make the process difficult.

I think it is clear enough for us to follow the directions easily because the wordings are so direct. We can follow it step by step without being stuck by any

confusing directions because every paragraph contained a step and was supported by the methods to do them.

The last paper in the appendix ["The Gulf of Sidra"] is dealing with a historical composition. Let's look at it whether it's directly or indirectly described.

Some paragraphs used the deductive order and some paragraphs used the inductive order. But anyhow, they did state the main ideas and strengthen the ideas by the descriptions and the illustration. For instance, the following is the third paragraph:

> The USA showed up as a hero opposing Kaddafi's action by crossing the 'line of death.' "The purpose is to exert the USA's right to conduct naval and air exercises in every part of the globe," said Secretary of State George Shultz in April 7, 1986 Newsweek article "Kaddafi's Crusade" (pg. 24). As a result, as the USA expected, the Libyans attacked them and they attacked the Libyans in response. At the end, some Libyans were killed but the exact number was not able to be determined.

The paragraph started with the crossing of the 'line of death' by the USA. Then the second sentence told about the purpose of the action. After that, it mentioned about the response from each other's actions and lastly, it concluded that some Libyans were killed.

After analyzing the papers, it seems to me that the Oriental have the inclination in following the genre of writing in writing a composition. In literature such as fiction stories, experiences and plays, they tend to develop their ideas indirectly. The reason probably is that they use their imagination, which is affected by their culture and way of thinking. On the other hand, the Oriental use the directly developed ideas in the ordinary compositions such as articles in the newspapers that usually tell about the incidents that happen in the history, describe and object and instruct an activity because they know what the readers expect in searching for information.

--Sabariah Othman, Malaysia--

PAPER D: INDIRECTION: THE WAY CHINESE WRITE? [Uses Own Translations of Chinese Poetry and Newspaper Articles as Data]

As an assignment in the composition class, I read this article "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education," by Robert Kaplan. In the article, Kaplan mentioned, because language--"a mode of thinkng"--differs from culture to culture and changes from time to time, rhetorics belonging to different cultures vary. The American paragraph structure, in his opinion, is a straight line while the Oriental writing is "marked by what may be called an approach by indirection." As a Chinese, I don't agree with him completely. I think indirection is used in our writing but it depends on what type of writing. For example, poems or novels are types of writing that use indirection. However, authors of history books or reporters of newspapers do not use indirection.

Basically, Chinese essays and poetry follow a pattern. As I learned in elementary school, the pattern is divided into four parts. First, Chi--the beginning of the article. Second, Ch'on--the development of the first paragraph. Third, Ch'ung--talking about the topic in another way. Fourth, Ho--conclusion of the whole article. The old Chinese poems had to follow this pattern. The following is a classical poem from "Chinese Poetry" by Li Yu in Five Dynasties (Wu Dai):

虞美人
Yu Beauty

春花秋月幾時了
spring flowers autumn moon what time end

往事知多少
past events know how many

小樓昨夜又東風
small tower last night again east wind

故國不堪回首月明中
old country can't look-back moon bright middle

雕欄玉砌應猶在
carved railings jade inlays should still exist

只是朱顏改
but;only red-faces(youthful) change

問君能有幾多愁
ask you can have how much sorrow

恰似一江春水向東流
just like a river spring water toward east flow

1. Spring flowers, autumn moon: when to end?
2. The past: how much is known?
3. Upon the tower last night, east winds blow again.
4. Native country unbearable to look back amidst the bright moon.
5. Carved railings, jade inlays should still be there.
6. Only faces are changed.
7. How much sorrow do you have?
8. The way a spring river eastward flows.

The author was a king before he wrote this poem. Because of this unusual personal experience, most of his works had the same style--full of sadness. In this particular poem, he was describing how he felt after he lost his throne. Sentences 1 & 2 are Chi. 3 & 4 are Ch'on. They look like a description of scenery, but in fact, they describe how helpless the writer was. He was forced to move to the south from the palace where he used to live. Even though flowers, the moon looked alike, the east wind still blew in the south, he missed his home very much. Sentences 5 & 6 are Ch'ung. Instead of continuing the above and talking about the homesickness, he mentioned "faces are change." It means everything in the palace was the same except the people who held the power changed. 7 & 8 are Ho. He concluded that he could not do anything but let all the sorrow flow with the water. In the passage, readers can't find sadness through words. The author talked about flowers, the tower and so on, but he never stated that he was sad about what had happened to him. This is like Kaplan described "turn around the subject and show it from a variety of tangential views, but the subject is never looked at directly.

However, Chinese writing can be very direct, too. Below is a report from Nono--a Chhinese magazine about the president of Singapore.

> The president, Mr. Lee, and first lady of Singapore came to Taiwan on June 28th. This was their 8th visit to Taiwan. What differed was the visit was official this time. This made Mr. Lee become a hot topic in Taiwan.
>
> Mr. Lee is an old friend of Republic of China. His mother, son, and daughter all have been to Taiwan. Because three-fourths of Singapore's population is made of Chinese, Taiwan and Singapore can learn from each other a lot.
>
> Mr. Lee is sixty-three years old now. Though all of his hair has turned grey, he is still as strong as before. He has been trying to develop Singapore's independence and construction for a long time. Therefore, people in Singapore love him very much. . .

In this example, indirection is not appeared at all. The first paragraph states the truth directly--the president of Singapore came to Taiwan. The second one described the relationship between Taiwan and Singapore. All of the information in the paragraph does not turn around the subject. It is different from the poem, because it is a report. In this kind of writing, readers are looking for the fact. They don't want to spend time to guess what the message that the article carries. They expect to read the report and understand the situation. Under this circumstance, indirection is unnecessary.

In a word, Chinese writing is not necessarily indirect, as we can see in the examples above. The usage of indirect does exist in poems or some essays. However, Chinese writing can be very direct while dealing newspaper articles or interviews. Whether to be indirect or not depends on the type of writing.

--Theresa Tsai, Taiwan--

PAPER E: CULTURE OR INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY? [Uses American Diary Entries and Letters as Data]

In the article, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education," Kaplan discusses the different types of cultural writing styles. He states that people of a certain culture will have the same writing style, which differs from other cultures' style of writing due to rhetoric, which is a way of thinking. Kaplan feels that native English writers write in a direct manner. He also feels that Arabic writings mainly contain parallelism, Oriental writings are indirect, and Romance writings are direct but show digression.

I feel that Kaplan is wrong in the fact that native English writers write directly. Many of the essays Kaplan read were written under the direction of an instructor, which does not sho original thought patterns produced by the native English writer. My hypothesis is that native English writers differ among themselves in their writing styles because of rhetoric. I have found three pieces of impromptu writings to support my hypothesis. None of these pieces of writing show the characteristics of direct English writing according to Kaplan.

My first example is a journal entry from Debi, who is a native English writer:

> Here I am sitting, thinking of a friend who may not be living tomorrow. He might take his life tonight. I can picture that: the embalment after pints of his precious blood drains from his body because of a quick flick of a razor. They would fill his pale, stone body with a transparent liquid. I can see now as I gaze over his soulless body, at his funeral, wishing I could have made him understand that he has friends to live for, now he will never talk to me, never skate with me, never see me flush when I trip over my skates or see me laugh when he says something funny and now as I stand over him with my heart aching, he can not see the tears fall from my eyes. He'll never see me again. As they shut the lid to his casket, I realize I'll never see him again either.

This piece of writing resembles a Romance style of writing, which portrays digression. Digression is the act of turning aside from the main subject. Debi introduces the reader to a situation, then states the topic in the second sentence. It seems to me she wanders off the subject but jumps back to the main point throughout the entry. Therefore, this piece of writing is not directly written as Kaplan expected.

My second example is a journal from Michelle, who is also a native English writer:

> It was just Alicia, Tanya, and me. We did everything together; we even got our haircut by the same hairdresser. My love for them grew just as much as theirs did for me. We were the three stooges sharing a year of great highs. We had been acquaintances before our Senior year in high school. But at the start of our Senior year we found that our likes and dislikes were very similar. That month produced a great friendship that we thought would last forever. I remember directing the whole marching band while Tanya and Alicia stood side by side on the football field.

While we were in the stands I was able to sit by them when I wasn't directing. Gossipping was a major part of our friendship. We talked about guy problems at lunch. My problem was with my boyfriend, Tanya's problem was with her fiance, and Alicia's problem was with her dating game. We came to the conclusion that all guys were jerks. There was no one else involved in our group. We figured we were comfortable with each other and we even tried bringing another person in but they would never work out. We had lots of fun but it all had to end when graduation came; we all had different things to do. Alicia staved home to go to college and work, Tanya got married and held down two jobs, and I had to come here to Batesville for college. I talked with Alicia a few weeks ago, and we told each other how much we missed our little group.

This piece of writing portrays an Oriental style of writing. Kaplan explains that Oriental people write indirectly where the subject is viewed many ways but never directly. Michelle's entry barely touched on the main point (friendship group). She explains what revolved around the group, touching the main point once or twice. This example supports my hypothesis opposing Kaplan's.

My final example is a letter from Leata, also a native English writer:

Dear Alicia,

As you know by now, we came by.

I hate the way you wrapped presents for me, but I loved everything.

I have read about six of Piers Anthony's books. I can't wait to read this one! I love the Hershey's kisses: they're my favorite kind of candy. At home I'm always doing crosswords, so guess what I'll be doing now.

I hope you have a fantastic Christmas. We didn't go to school all this week.

Carla and Ronnie are visiting. Nancy, Ronnie's 14-year old daughter, and I are having fun.

Tell Jimbo I said "Hi."

Leata

I compared her letter to the Arabic style of writing and I saw similarities. The Arabic style of writing includes parallelism, which is single sentences forming a paragraph, more like a list of corresponding statesments. Leata's main point is her Christmas vacation (though it is not stated). She has composed a list of sentences. Notice how she has two parts to one sub-topic, such as "I love the Hershey's kisses, that's my favorite kind of candy." This piece of writing shows parallelism because it contains sets of sentences with corresponding statements within the sets. Therefore, Leata does write in the Arabic style, which disagrees with Kaplan's statements.

In conclusion, a rough draft shows the native English writers' thought patterns without an instructor's interference. I feel that Kaplan should study rough drafts because the thinking process is changed when a rough draft is compared to an orderly piece of writing. My three examples show that not every native English speaker writes directly. They write differently because they all have a different way of thinking.

--Alicia Parker, USA--